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ON CHRISTMAS

Rev. Munetoshi Maejima

Therefore, if any one is in Christ, they are a new creation: the old has passed away, behold, the new has come." (II Cor. 5:7).

uring this Christmas season, when we welcome the time to be new, we remember the people whose lives are dedicated to the struggles for justice. We pray for God's shining light for those whose hearts are filled with pain and sorrow due to the loss of family members through their struggles.

In a world filled with sadness we may not be able to find the will of God, but God manifests the glory in the new but powerless and vulnerable baby, through the happening of Christmas.

What then is the meaning of new? It does not mean to bring a freshness into old things, nor to possess a new and rare model. The birth of Jesus was a total and complete new creation out of this world. Thus, Mary and Joseph were surprised and fearful when they faced the birth of the newborn baby.

Jesus was born as an outcast - there was no room for them in the inn and his birth took place in a stable among animals. The Bible tells us of the short life of Jesus, who lived among the forgotten people. Living as an outcast in society, Jesus acted to break the walls of legalism. Because of his attempts to change the value systems of the time, Jesus had to die on the cross.

Mother of the World

Let us sing of the labour of the mother of the world, and her bringing of the universe to birth, how she gave life to her children and she saw that they were good, and she longed for them to love her in the world.

Let us sing of the laughter of the mother of the world, and the freedom of her children on the earth; how she chose her special people and she promised them her love, and she called them into covenant with her.

But we sing of the anger of the mother of the world, and the straying of her children from her path, for they didn't understand that the sacrifice she craved was the sacrifice of justice and of love.

Let us sing of the weeping of the mother of the world, and the sending of her child to his death: how she offered to her children a sign of showing how life is when they struggle for her vision for the world.

Let us celebrate the beauty of the mother of the world, and rejoice because she loves us to the end. But to celebrate is empty if we do not show her love: let us demonstrate her justice in the world!

By: Marion Maddox

Through the life of Christ we come to learn the real meaning of new being - a holistic reality. The new being is the restoration of God's original blessings through freeing ourselves from the dominance of economic criteria.

We are not able to realize newness by our senses alone, but rather we must think about the meaning of new creation and take action to affirm the humanity which has been forgotten.

The birth of Jesus, and his life and death on the cross are powerful indications of the full richness and sincerity of humanity.

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NCC/J LETTER OF PROTEST

Health Condition of Rev. Moon Ik-Hwan
Worsening

The Rev. Moon Ik Hwan who visited Pyongyang in April 1989 and was imprisoned upon his return to south Korea, is suffering from various diseases. Two doctors, one who was requested by Rev. Moon's family and the other appointed by the prison authorities, have determined that Mr. Moon is suffering from congestive heart failure, a decrease in kidney function and neuralgia. He needs a thorough diagnosis at a general hospital.

Responding to this situation the National Christian Council in Japan sent letters to President Roh Tae-Woo and Mr. Huh Kyong-Ko, the Minister of Justice. The following is a summary translation of the letter.

"We, the National Christian Council in Japan have been very concerned about the imprisonment of the Rev. Moon Ik-Hwan, who was arrested under the National Security Law. Recent reports tell us that he is seriously ill and he has been kept in prison without any hospital treatment.

We have opposed the imprisonment of Rev. Moon and supported his visitation to Pyongyang which was a pioneering attempt based on his faith understanding. However, we have not received any response from your government. Having learned that the Rev.'d Moon's sickness is critical we are asking for special attention for the immediate release of Rev. Moon.

Otherwise, we expect your wise decision that he will be able to get the necessary treatment in order to avoid his health worsening.

We believe that we must show our special concern for Rev. Moon since he is our co-worker in Christ beyond national boundaries; moreover he has been working for the universal human rights of all people and for democracy in Korea.

In solidarity with brothers and sisters in

Christ we appeal for your humane treatment of the Rev. Moon Ik-Hwan. We pray to God for intensive guidance, that your government and the Ministry of Justice will ensure that peace and justice prevail on your land."

December 7, 1989

The Rev. Kentaro Takeuchi
NCC/J Moderator

PROTEST IN JAPAN

JAPANESE CORPORATION SHUTS PLANT IN KOREA

-Dismissed Women Workers in Japan
Demanding Negotiations with Company

TND, a Japanese owned company which has been manufacturing cassette tape decks in Kunpo, Kyongi-do, Korea, suddenly closed its plant on Oct. 18, in order to destroy the democratic union. 450 workers were dismissed, out of which 400 are women.

Four women union representatives came to Tokyo on December 9 in order to hold negotiations with Tanashin Denki (Headquarters of TND) president Mr. Tanaka.

The local union of Tanashin Denki and many other groups are supporting the workers and are holding daily protest action outside the company gate. In addition to demands made on the company, the workers are demanding that the Japanese Government also take responsibility.

The workers are struggling for their survival rights. The closure of the company means the loss of a job. Most of the workers are young women who are supporting their families with their income. Those active in the union will have to face the possibility of being put on a national black list and prevented from working at other factories. They are not just fighting to retain their jobs but are fighting against the use of power and capital by the company owner, fighting for the solidarity of workers in south Korea and the Asia region, and fighting against the government policies in south Korea.

Japan. workers are making the following demands of Mr. Tanaka:

Begin negotiations with the TND union in accordance with the collective bargaining agreement.

Reinstate the dismissed workers and start the plant in Kunpo.

Work towards the immediate release of Kim Pun-jong, president of the TND union who has been detained by police since December 3.

JCAN goes to print the workers and support groups in Japan have still not been able to enter into negotiations with the company. The NCC/J has been involved in gathering support and pressuring the company to enter into negotiations. The company at first showed no intention to talk to the workers but seems to be responding under pressure and increasing media attention. It is still not determined how long the workers will stay in Japan.

On December 25, Christmas Day, a public meeting is to be held to publicize the struggles of the workers, the actions taken by the Japanese Company, and to make solidarity with the workers of Korea.

The wind is cold but our hearts are strong. Let us move toward victory."

BOYCOTT CHIQUITA BANANAS

Banana Workers Demand Agrarian Land Reform and Reinstatement of Dismissed Workers

Two banana workers from the Mindanao region of the Philippines were in Japan in November, in cooperation with NCC-Japan Committee on Philippine Concerns, to promote a boycott campaign against Chiquita Bananas.

The TADEC (Tagum Agricultural Development Co.) Corporation, where the workers are

employed, is a Philippine owned company with its capital base provided by three companies: Mindinao Fruit, Chiquita (Hong Kong based and the go between for exports to Japan), and United Kyokoto Company, located in Japan. The TADEC plantation has been exporting banana's to Japan for 20 years, and the Japan market now accounts for 80% of its output under the well-known Chiquita label.

In early spring of this year, 1,600 workers were dismissed. Although the company attributed the dismissal to damage from the typhoon, it was clear that this was only used as an excuse. Most of those dismissed had been identified as labor organizers, working against the government controlled union in an attempt to form a democratic union in which the concerns of the workers would be represented.

The workers claimed that the conditions at the TADEC plantation, which has a labor force of 10,000 workers, are among the worst in the Philippines. A worker with 13 years of experience earns 66 pesos for 8 hours of work, in a country where the poverty line is at 174 pesos. It is a salary which cannot ensure survival. Most plantation workers live in bunkhouses 4-5 square meters large, housing 4-5 families.

In addition to the meager wages working conditions are also deplorable. The TADEC plantation has a quota system in which a specified amount of work must be finished within 8 hours. If it is not completed, the workers must work overtime without pay. Chemicals are used in weeding the fields, yet the company does not provide any protective gear against chemical ingestion or bodily contact, these must be purchased by the workers themselves.

Although TADEC was established in 1950 its first union elections were held in 1988. Before the elections the owner, Antonio Floirendo, had fled to Hawaii with deposed president Marcos when the "EDSA Uprising" took place. After "EDSA" the workers were very hopeful that a democratic union could be organized. Their hopes were dashed when Floirendo paid the Aquino Government 70,000 pesos and made a statement to the effect that all Marcos' wealth was obtained illegally.

The payoff and statement enabled him to return to his company in the Philippines. Thus, Floirendo was able to campaign for his own "yellow" union.

The workers did not vote for the union freely. During the time of the election the polling places were heavily guarded by Floirendo's "private army", and workers were forced, with threats of dismissal and violence, to either vote pro-company or not vote at all.

Floriendo warned the dismissed workers that if they filed a case against him anywhere in the Philippines they would lose. He is wealthy and his influence is widespread, donating money to community projects and fostering relationships with local and national leaders. His brother-in-law is a member of the governments Agrarian Reform Committee, supporting the interests of big business. Thus the workers, in an effort to put pressure on the company and government, launched the boycott campaign.

The workers have put forth two demands: Reinstate of the dismissed workers and implementation of agrarian land reform. The TADEC0 plantation spans over 7,000 hectares of land; 6,000 of which belongs to the Davao Penal Colony (government owned) and is rented to TADEC0 at a nominal price of 250 pesos a month. If the Government implements land reform the land which TADEC0 rents would also be eligible for reform. If the workers demand of land reform is met, they hope to run the plantation as a worker-owned collective.

INTERNATIONAL CHRISTIAN MARITIME ASSOCIATION

The International Christian Maritime Association (ICMA), a voluntary association of Christian organizations engaged in promoting the welfare of seafarers and their families, held its plenary conference from Oct. 1-6, 1989 in Lagonissi, Greece. Rev. Alfred Boettcher of the Association for Seaman's Mission in Kanagawa, Japan (ICMA member),

participated in the International meetin

The member societies of ICMA are represented in over 700 ports world-wide by a network of chaplains, assistants and voluntary helpers who work on a daily basis with seafarers. The ICMA is involved in a variety of activities behalf of seafarers such as securing the human rights, providing welfare facilities, speaking on behalf of members within the shipping industry monitoring developments in the shipping industry, working together with related bodies and pastoral care and Christian worship.

The conference drew together 120 participants from all over the world under the theme "Christian Ministry in a Pluralistic World." A significant theme in light of the changes which are occurring in Eastern Europe. Work among seafarers has developed at a varied pace and manner in many parts of the world. The concept of ministry to the seafarers has been revolutionized over the past 20 years, and major changes in the shipping industry and the globalization of society are taking place at a rapid rate. These changes have made evident the fact that we live in a pluralistic world, with different religions, and political and economic systems.'

Among the topics addressed at the conference were the accomplishments made in the area of human rights since the last plenary in 1985, with special attention paid to the situation in the Philippines with the change in attitude of "The Philippine Overseas Employment Administration (POEA), which made a 180 degree turn from a hostile attitude toward the ICMA to strong cooperation. This led to a "Maritime Manning Conference" in 1987, which dealt with the abuses in the hiring of seafarers through Manning agents (not only a problem in the Philippines). The Philippines is the largest supplier of maritime labor.

A keynote speaker addressed the need to consider "interfaith partnership" with non-Christian chaplains working among international seafarers along with their Christian counterparts in order to promote pluralism in respect for those of

er faiths. The conference was held in
ce and it was the hope that the Greek
hodox Church, which previously had very
ited involvement with the seafarer
ers, might through the conference, be
nulated to become active in supporting
many seafarers in their country. This
e materialized as a church leader, in
meeting outlined plans for specific
jects for future actions.

the eight resolutions made, No. 7 was
special interest to those in Japan. It
ed "authorities of each country to
ilitate the freedom of visiting
farers to go ashore, to treat them as
sts and contributors to the local
onomy, and not to restrict shore leave
entire crews in retaliation for the
aults of individuals, or for reasons of
nternational politics." Due to the
quent restriction of shore leave in
an, a letter will be written to the
istry of Justice in Tokyo urging an end
this practice.

ormation taken from a report by
plain A. Boettcher
sociation for Seaman's Mission
agawa, Japan

HONORARY WHITE AWARD

'Honorary White' Award Won by Tokyo
Jewelry Store

Christmas Buying of Platinum, Gold and Diamonds Supports Apartheid Regime

Saturday Dec. 23, in the expensive
nza section of Tokyo, a crowd gathered
outside of the fashionable Ginza Yamazaki
jewelry shop. They did not go to purchase
gold and diamonds but rather to present
the 'Honorary White Award' to the store
and its parent company - Tanaka Kikinzoku,
Japan's largest trader in diamonds, gold
and platinum.

In 1961 a South African government
official announced that white status would
be conferred upon Japanese visitors. This
response to that government's decision
began a trade relationship with Japan.

The Japan Anti-Apartheid Committee and the
Tokyo Office of the African National
Conference (ANC) initiated the event in
order to make known the relationship
between such jewelry traders and the
apartheid regime in South Africa. 90% of
the platinum used in Japan comes from
South Africa, and Japan accounts for 80%
of the world platinum market. Not only
platinum but 30% of the world's diamonds
are consumed by Japan. Diamonds, gold and
platinum are South Africa's largest income
producers.

The group passed out leaflets which urged
passerby's not to purchase gold, platinum
or diamonds for a holiday gift. For by
buying this kind of present you're
contributing to the racist regime in South
Africa. Expensive accessories are very
popular among young Japanese women.

The company officials refused to meet with
the demonstrators outside, claiming that
they didn't understand the purpose of the
protest and that they were very busy. The
group gathered outside the store was
waiting with a chocolate cake decorated
with gold bars - in celebration of their
winning the honorary white award - which
they intended to present to the company
officials.

After company officials refused to meet
with the demonstrators the cake was
brought into the crowded store and placed
on a display counter. However, it was
quickly removed and returned by a store
employee to its box on the sidewalk
outside the store.

MARY'S SONG OF PRAISE

Mary's Song of Praise
Scripture: Luke 1:46-55

Mary was waiting for the first Christmas
with more exuberance than anyone else
because she was expecting her first baby.

Among the many things that we wait in
anticipation for, the birth of a first
child is the most anxious time (I know
from my own experience). Since Mary was

made pregnant by the holy spirit she must have wondered what child was to be born.

The angel Gabriel greeted her and announced that she would become pregnant and give birth to a son, when she heard the angels words she was deeply troubled, wondering what the words meant - she was a virgin. During those times the pregnancy of an unmarried woman was a sin and she risked being stoned to death. But Mary said, "I am the Lord's servant, may it happen to me as you have said."

If it were not for the obedience and decision of Mary, Jesus the Savior might not have been born. The birth of Jesus was possible because of Mary's acceptance, in spite of the many sacrifices. This was Mary's qualification to be the mother of Jesus.

The bible text known as the "Magnificat", the song Mary sang when visiting her relative Elizabeth, begins - "My heart praise the Lord; my soul is glad because of God my Savior, for God has remembered me, God's lowly servant!" She praised God because God remembered even her, a lowly servant. Mary is the most worshiped and admired woman in the world, particularly in the Catholic Church. However, she referred to herself as a "lowly servant" - I don't think this is just a word of humility.

Mary is not the daughter of a wealthy family in Jerusalem. She was just a girl from the poor village of Nazareth - the name of her parents are not even written in the Bible. Through the song of the Magnificat we can imagine how poor Mary was, and can understand the image which she carried of Jesus the Savior. The Lord showed strength with his arm, scattering the proud in the imagination of their hearts. The Lord has brought down mighty kings from their thrones and lifted up the lowly, and filled the hungry with good things and sent the rich away with empty hands.

This is the Messiah for whom Mary and the many poor people in Israel were waiting for. If Mary was rich, she would not have waited for the Savior like this.

She also sang "From now on all people will

call me happy because of the great things the Mighty God had done for me." Yes, she is the happiest woman in the world, all generations, because she accepted Jesus in her body. She is not blessed because of her talents, beauty or her heritage. It is only because of obedience in welcoming Jesus into her body. Those who will welcome Jesus Mary will be happy because Jesus will be with them.

In this Christmas season in 1989 what kind of Savior are we waiting for in this society?

Are we ready to welcome the Jesus Mary was waiting for?

Summary of a sermon given by
Rev. KIM Young
Toshimagaoka Church, Tokyo



by Kim Young Nim

JCAN STAFF: Munetoshi Maejima, Lia Ainsworth, Aiko Y Carter, Anthony Carter

HOLIDAY GREETINGS
TO ONE AND ALL
MAY PEACE REIGN IN YOUR HEARTS
THE YEAR THROUGH